rationalised the selection procedure by SSBs where final rejections take place.

An 'Image Projection Campaign' has been launched with the assistance of a professional media agency to highlight the positive and unique aspects of the Army as a career option. The measure has been initiated to plug the existing information gap and make youth aware of the excellent opportunities awaiting them in case they join the Army as an officer.

The Government have since issued orders revising the pay scales and allowances of the Armed Forces Officers and other ranks. Some of the redeeming features are as follows:

(a) The pay scale of Brigadier and equivalent in services has been revised to Rs. 16700-450-18050/- in improvement of the Pay Commission recommended scale of Rs. 15350-450-17600/-.

(b) The rank of 2nd Lt. and equivalent has been abolished and all officers on commissioning are now graduated to the rank of Lt. and equivalent in the starting pay of Rs. 8250/- (Pay scale Rs. 8250-300-10050). this is higher than the starting pay of Rs. 8000/- for a new entrant to Group 'A' service on the civil side.

(c) The stipend granted to Cadet trainees in the Service Academic has been steeply raised to Rs. 8000/- per month from the existing rate of Rs. 1500/- per month.

It is expected that the above measures will go a long way to substantially increase the attractiveness of Armed Forces as a career option.

In view of the above, it is not considered necessary to conduct any such survey at this juncture.

Ban on purchase of guns from Bofors

44. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government (JPC) has placed a ban on the purchase of ammunition from the Bofors company for the 155 mm guns purchased from it; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken to indigenise production of ammunition?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) Embargo was placed on business dealings with M/s Bofors in December, 1989 by the Government and not by the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC). The embargo prohibits the purchase of any item from M/s Bofors and is not specific or confined to ammunition.

An Empowered Task Group has been constituted to identify and indigenise as many items as possible.

Self sufficiency in Defence production

45. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finalised a long-term plan upto 2005 for achieving 70% self-sufficiency in defence production from present level of 40%;

(b) if so, important details of the plan finalised with investment/project profiles and order of investments and phasing thereof;

(c) what were the targets of defence production for the last three years ending upto 31st March, 1997 and achievements reported thereunder;

(d) details of on-going major projects and progress achieved thereof during 1996-97 and investment proposed during 1997-98 on these projects, project-wise; and

(e) details of fresh initiatives taken to avail of latest technologies on long-term basis in defence production through joint production ventures with friendly countries to meet defence requirements?